



The 12 Myths of Translation

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INTRODUCTION

Every company, especially those that work with foreign customers or have offices in more than one country, will need to have something translated at some point, be it documents, e-mail messages, advertising campaigns... Often, these translations can be done in-house, but on some occasions **it will be necessary to outsource the job to a professional translator.**

It is very likely, therefore, that you have already had to contact a translation agency or a translator in the past and, if you haven't, you probably will do in the near future. And when that time comes, **it is very important that you are fully aware of what this involves and that you do not get caught up in the myths surrounding translation.**



And this is precisely why we have written this e-book, which will help you gain a quick and easy **understanding of some key concepts related to the world of translation**. Once you have read it, you will be better prepared for all your future contacts with professional translators and translation companies.

In this e-book, we have compiled the 12 most important and critical myths related to translations that we have encountered in more than 18 years of experience with many different customers and companies.

MYTH N.º 1



If I speak and read two languages, I can be a professional translator.

I drive my car every day. But that doesn't make me specially qualified to be a Formula 1 racing driver. Without a proper educational background and appropriate training, one can never be a real translator, let alone a good one. Furthermore, the skills needed by translators nowadays are not limited to their knowledge of languages. Modern-day translators must have specific technical knowledge of the field and this requires specific training. This is precisely why you cannot consider yourself to be a professional translator simply because you can hold your own in two or more languages.

Without a proper educational background and appropriate training, one can never be a real translator (...)

MYTH N.º 2

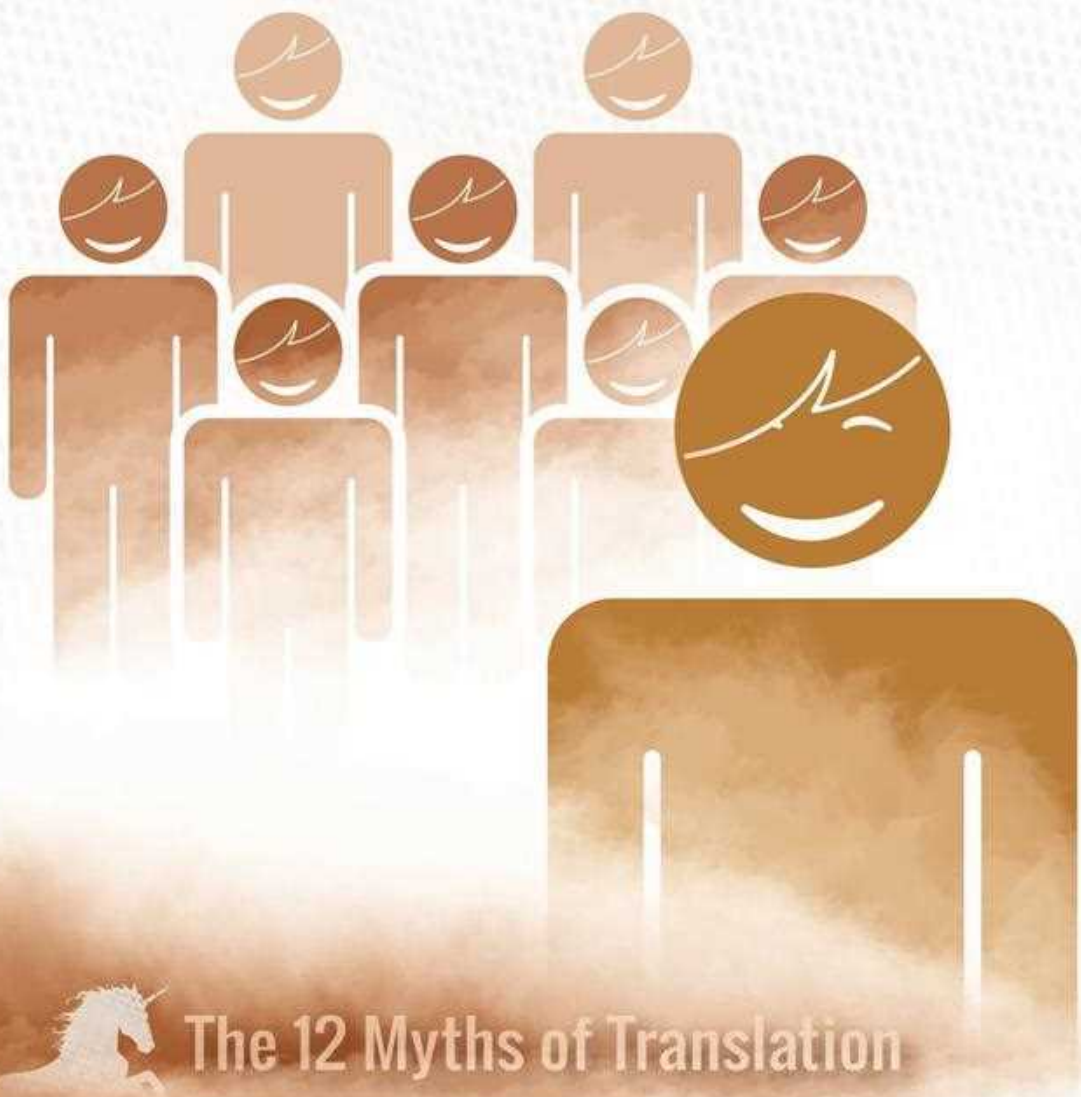


Now that I have a degree in translation, I'm the best translator in the whole wide world.

Oh no you're not! You need experience . And, in particular, you must be open-minded enough to be able to learn new things every day and actively search for knowledge. A good translator needs to have professional experience and this can only be gained over time and through many hours of work.

You need Experience.

MYTH N.º 3



Translators can work fine by themselves; they don't need a team for anything.

It is no mere chance that a translation done by a certified agency will have been revised, obligatorily, by at least one other translator. When it comes to producing a quality translation, revising the translated document is almost as important a step as the actual translating. This is why it is always best to work with an agency, since they will have the technological means at their disposal to ensure fast and efficient liaison between professionals with very specific skills and experience. It is true that there are freelance translators who have been working alone for years and who may be able to help you with a project that needs to be translated. But make no mistake; the level and quality of the translation will never be the same.

... will have been revised, obligatorily, by at least one other translator.

MYTH N.º 4



Someone who is bilingual can always be a translator and will always be a great translator.

Not necessarily. To be bilingual and a translator, you need to be highly competent in two different languages. This makes it more difficult and less likely that such competence will be achieved without a great deal of study and dedication, as well as a hearty dose of experience. So keep in mind that being bilingual is not synonymous with being a translator. A translator is always someone who has specific training for the purpose.

(...) being bilingual is not synonymous with being a translator (...)

MYTH N.º 5



Now that we have machine translation, translators aren't needed any more.

Translation agencies have dozens of customers on their books who believed this myth... But don't be fooled; a machine translation will always contain numerous mistakes, incoherencies and other failings. While it does have its uses, machine translation should only be used to translate isolated words or short phrases or sentences. However, when the desired outcome is a careful translation of a lengthy document, then there is simply no substitute for human translation.

Human language is so complex that machine translation is simply unable to produce the same results.

While machine translation can indeed assist, facilitate and, in certain cases of simpler texts not intended for professional use, even substitute a "real, live" translator, human language is so complex that machine translation is simply unable to produce the same results.

The 12 Myths of Translation

MYTH N.º 6



OK, fine... but translation agencies have computerised translation programmes that translate everything.

These programmes are called "computer-assisted translation" (or "CAT") tools, but they don't actually translate. They are a set of computerised tools that help with the management of translation projects (word counts, elimination of repetitions etc.) and of each customer's own glossaries. Even so, these glossaries still require intervention by the team of linguists using the CAT tool.

(...) a set of computerised tools that help with the management (...)

So it's worth bearing in mind that while today's digital tools are very useful and help professional translators do their jobs better and faster, they are no substitute for the "real thing".

MYTH N.º 7

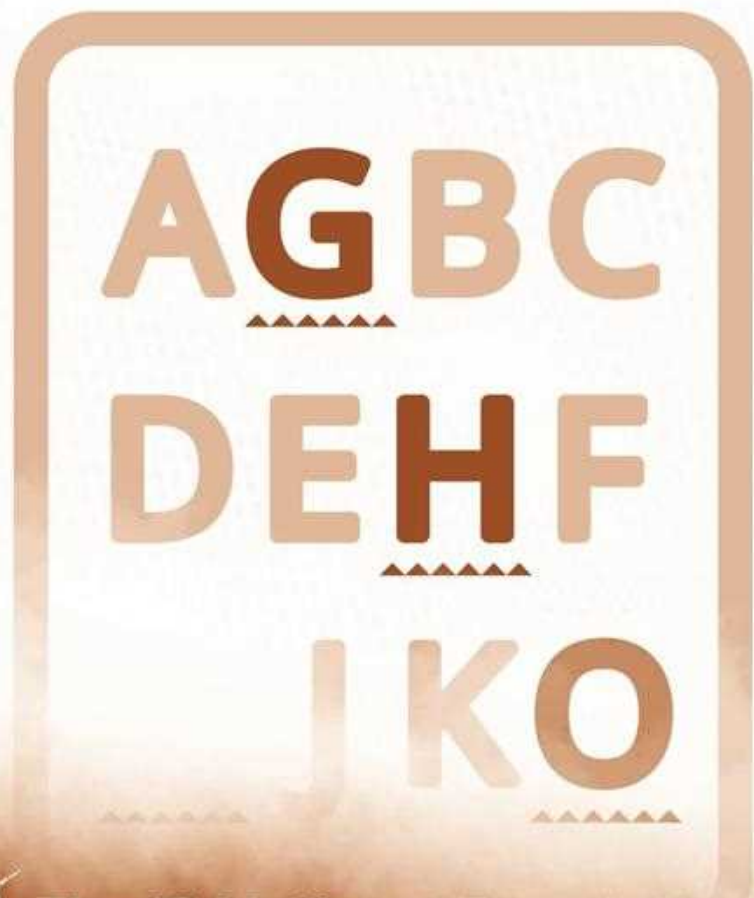


Translation agencies are always asking for editable documents just to annoy us.

Translation agencies ask for editable documents to facilitate and streamline the job and simultaneously keep costs down. It is true that a translation can be done using a digitalised document, but it is a much lengthier and costlier process. Precisely because of the existence of CAT tools (software that assists translation), an editable document can cost far less to translate, and take much less time, apart from making a significant contribution to the overall consistency of the translation.

(...) an editable document can cost far less to translate, and take much less time (...)

MYTH N.º 8



The 12 Myths of Translation

An original text doesn't need to be well-written or even well-organised, if it's going to be translated. The translator will take care of that while translating.

This is completely false! A poorly-written original may result in the translator misunderstanding the content and, consequently, translating it incorrectly. The translation will then need to be corrected, so the whole process will take longer and cost more. Worse still, the translator may not be able to understand the rough draft of the original at all, and will constantly be contacting the author for clarification. Translators cannot take it upon themselves to change either the structure or the meaning of the original text without the author's consent. And, indeed, it is precisely this that the person revising the translation, and who, in a professional agency works in liaison with the translator, will be looking out for.

(...) A poorly-written original may result in the translator misunderstanding the content (...)

MYTH N.º 9



You can save time by having an original text translated before it is revised or edited, without loss of quality.

This depends greatly on the length of the document, the extent and number of any revisions and, above all, on the scheduling. Since this is a process that can put the quality of the translation at risk, the project manager must be made aware of the situation without fail and from the very outset. Otherwise, we will effectively have a myth on our hands.

You can rest assured that it is always easier and faster to translate a document which has already been fully revised and finalised than one which still has to be revised and tweaked.

(...) it is always easier and faster to translate a document which has already been fully revised and finalised (...)

MYTH N.º 10



If you translate a document with Google Translate, you will only have to pay the price for revision, rather than the price for translation.

Many people believe that they can start the translation process in-house by using Google Translate, and that they will then only require professional revision. However, if the translation is very bad (and it is still very common for machine translations to be bad), it will cost just as much for revision as it would have done for translation . Plus, it could take longer to do and still not be as good as a translation done from scratch.

(...) if the translation is very bad (...) it will cost just as much for revision as it would have done for translation.

If you have an important text that needs to be translated do not hesitate to contact a professional translation company from the very outset. This will certainly save you a lot of time and personal effort.

MYTH N.º 11

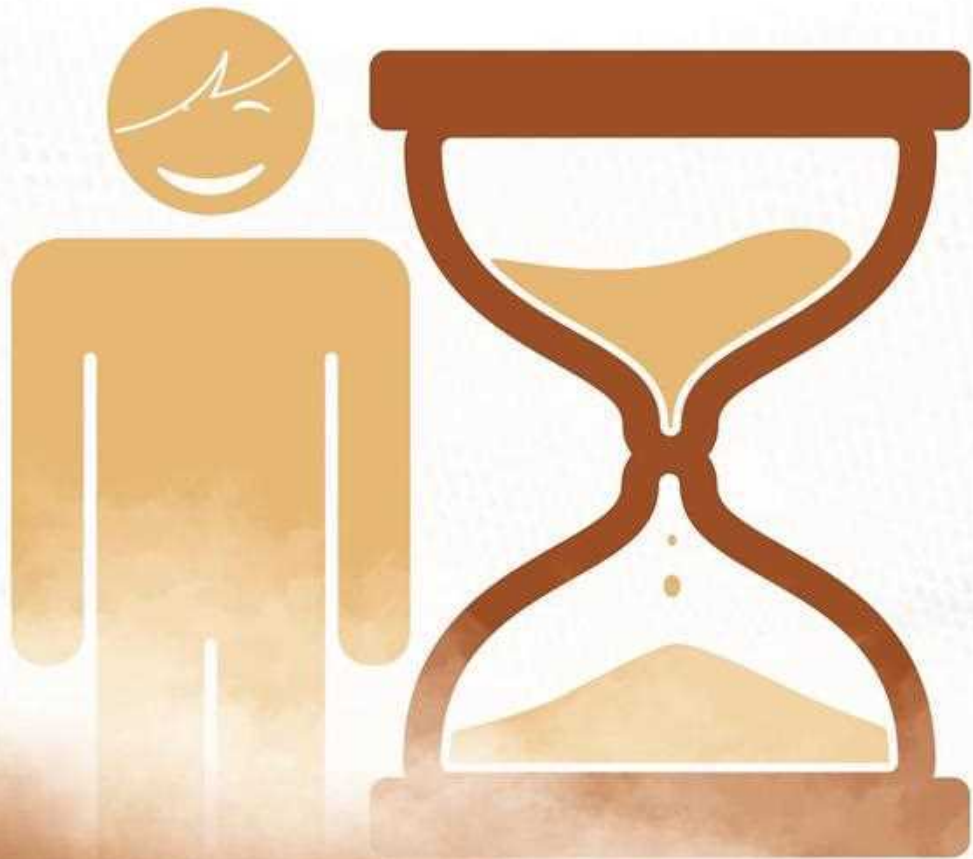


If we remove the punctuation marks, numbers and proper names that are repeated in my original, I can get cheaper quotes for my translation.

If you work with less-than-professional translators, perhaps. But if you work with a trustworthy professional agency, there is no point in going to so much trouble because the project management support software will automatically calculate all of these discounts and any others that may apply. What's more, there will be no need to go through the document afterwards to replace the punctuation marks, numbers and proper names, because they will all be right where they are supposed to be in the translated document.

(...) the project management support software will automatically calculate all of these discounts (...)

MYTH N.º 12



The translation process into multiple languages is very lengthy, especially when some of the languages are unusual ones.

Professional translation agencies use project management support software to handle complex translation projects. They are able to contact many different tried and tested translators from around the world at the same time. And they can also arrange for each translation to be revised by a second translator just as quickly. So, for a professional agency, this is now a myth .

(...) for a professional agency, this is now a myth (...)

We hope we have successfully demystified the main myths related to the world of translation and that this e-book will help you in your future dealings with translators or translation companies.

If you enjoyed reading it, share it with colleagues and friends.



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